

BACKGROUND - SOUTH VIETNAM  
STATUS OF DEFENSE MINISTER MINH

- I. Ho Thong Minh was chosen by Diem for post of defense minister largely on grounds Minh could "get along" with sects.
  - A. Perhaps "got along" too well. When Diem "ordered" Minh and Army to boot Binh Xuyen out of National Police HQ (order given 29 Mar; later countermanded at French and US insistence), Minh tendered resignation rather than comply.
  - B. After incident on night 30 Mar, dissident's communique (in name United Front Nationalist Forces) claimed Minh had resigned because he disapproved Diem's "high treason."
- II. Minh apparently out, although whether or not for good is unclear. *Collins 1. per liaison*
  - A. Both US and French pressuring Diem to

reaffirm Minh as defense minister.

~~SECRET~~  
*Competent Engineer and administrator who has never been really trusted by Diem*